

"Yes, if he only knew," murmured the nun compassionately; and she held a restorative to the white lips of the patient, smoothed her pillows and bathed her forehead and wrists.

"Sister," said Bessie, "I suffered this way nearly all night, and something seemed to say, 'Take courage; God will not forsake your poor brother,' and I bore it all, and offered it all to my Savior on the Cross for poor Charlie."

"Blessed are they who suffer and hope, Bessie," said the Sister softly. "You have been with us for fifteen years, and your one thought has been of that unworthy, reckless brother. His conversion will surely be your reward. God will not let such faith and patience go unrewarded."

"Don't call him unworthy and reckless, Sister. He never meant to be either. When he was a little curly-headed fellow he used to get into every kind of mischief, but he always came to me, and I can see his black eyes yet flashing with temper, and hear him saying: 'Bess, you're the only friend a poor kid has. If they don't stop naggin' me I'll run off, but I'll never forget you, Bessie.' They were hard on him, Sister—father and mother were—and he did run off, and once in a while he'd write a letter on the sly and tell me where to answer, and I used to beg him not to forget his night prayers at least, and to go to Mass, but then I got this fall and was crippled, and he never wrote but once after—only once in these fifteen years—and he said he didn't believe in religion any more; that church and praying were for women, and he'd leave me to do his share, and then, Sister, I promised God I would suffer all the agony of this awful back and never murmur if He would bring Charlie around; and since I have been in this blessed place it has been easier; and he is never a minute out of my mind."

"How many rosaries do you say a day for him, Bessie, besides all the suffering?"

"Well, Sister, as I have nothing else to do I say the fifteen decades twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon, and a few other little prayers between the pains."

"God bless you, dear," said the nun; "keep on suffering and praying, and put me in your prayers, too, Bessie; for I need them."